

PERFORMANCE AUDIT

Work in progress: Audit description

Initiative 1163: Evaluating the Relevance of Required Training for Long-Term Care Workers

Initiative 1163, approved by voters in 2012, requires many long-term care workers to complete 75 hours of training in order to provide in-home care to the elderly and people with disabilities. The ultimate goal of the training is to improve the quality of care these vulnerable populations receive. The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is responsible for approving training curricula and instructors. DSHS contracts with the Training Partnership to develop and deliver the training to the majority of home care workers. The Training Partnership is a non-profit school formed by the Service Employees International Union and participating employers including the state of Washington.

Stakeholders – particularly advocates for people with developmental disabilities – are concerned the required training does not adequately prepare caregivers to meet the needs of those they serve. In their view, the curriculum used lacks adequate instruction in skills unique to caring for people with disabilities, such as handling behavioral issues. They also say the curriculum does not teach important life-saving skills, such as first aid and CPR, which are crucial because home-care workers are often the only person at home with their clients. Others, including some long-term care workers, are concerned the training provides little or no instruction in how to care for people who have special conditions, ranging from dementia, mental health and substance use disorders, to autism and special dietary needs.

Preliminary scope and objectives

Initiative 1163 requires a performance audit of Washington's long-term care worker program every two years. This audit, our sixth of the program, will examine the relevance of the training home care workers receive so they are better prepared to meet the diverse needs of their clients. The audit seeks to answer the following question:

- How can Washington improve the relevance of required home care worker training to better prepare long-term care workers to meet the needs of people who have complex or special care needs?

Timing

The audit was placed on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resumed in March 2021. We plan to publish the audit results before the end of 2021.



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